

AUSTRALIA

BRIEFS

SHIP POSITION REPORTS--CANBERRA: Ships in Australian waters will have to report their position daily from tomorrow to make search-and-rescue operations easier. They will have to send sailing reports, position reports and final reports through coastal radio stations to the Australian Coastal Surveillance Centre in Canberra, which coordinates all ship movements and rescue operations. The Transport Minister, Mr Hunt, said yesterday that the new law was an attempt to reduce the time between a ship getting into trouble and the rescue starting. The reporting system was the first in the world and had been operating on a voluntary basis for about eight years. The Australian ship-reporting system will be compulsory for all Australian ships and for foreign ships between their first Australian port and their last. Mr Hunt said that the system was provided free by the Federal Government as part of its obligations under the United Nations conventions on safety of life at sea. The Australian search-and-rescue area was the biggest in the world, covering a ninth of the world's surface.

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